

The CHOICE Connection

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CHOICES
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Quotable Quotes

"One of the marks of true greatness is the ability to develop greatness in others." ~ J.C. McCauley

"If you stop learning today, you stop leading tomorrow." ~ Howard Hendricks

*"Leadership capacity is not only those skills and attitudes we develop--teaming, reflective, inquiry, dialogue, collective responsibility--but it is also the various team structures created to pull all of us into the act of leadership." ~ Jan O'Neill and Anne Conzemius, *The Power of SMART Goals**

"The difference between school and life? In school you are taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson." ~ Tom Bodett

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." ~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Dear Jean,

It seems appropriate that as we enter into a new school year this August and September that I focus a bit on Leadership and school. I believe we grow up with many models during our youth that help us direct our leadership path. Those models might be our parents, our next door neighbors, our first employer and certainly our teachers. I wrote earlier this year about my growing into a leadership role and mentioned a few school events and programs that influenced

my path.

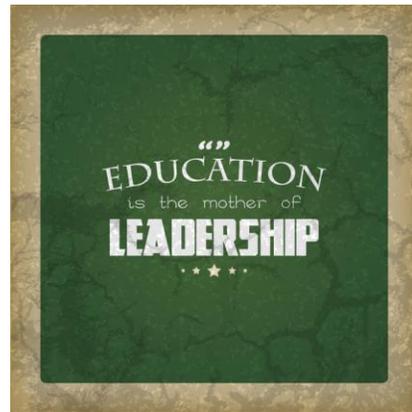
I have given a bit of thought as to how parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and siblings can enrich the leadership growth experience for the next generation. It is noteworthy to explore a bit more about the structures, programs, and events designed into school programs along with the extracurricular activities available to us. From the time we enter Kindergarten through our middle school and high school graduations and beyond we are presented opportunities to step up and lead. Sit back, reflect and consider when your leadership growth journey actually began. How are you paying it forward to those who will lead us in the future?

Sharing the Joy of Learning and Leading,
Jean

Leadership and School - The Proving (and Testing) Ground

The school year has started for all here in New Mexico. The school buses are back on the roads out here in the east mountains - early in the morning and again late in the afternoon. I can't help but think back to my first few years of teaching and thinking about the first few days of the school year when I was getting to know my students and they were getting to know me. There is a different energy in the air and the anticipation of 'new.'

Last month I wrote on the topic of leadership and parenting and the similar qualities they share. When thinking about our school experiences, I want to acknowledge others besides our parents that influenced our leadership path. These include our teachers, coaches, counselors, club sponsors, community partners, and our first employers. Your children, our future leaders, engage every day with these leader teachers and witness the power of their influence. These future leaders have approximately twelve years of opportunities and choices to accept and acknowledge their capacity for a leadership role.



I am not sure any of us started into a year of learning trying to figure out how to become a leader? I was ready to focus on a year of studies and I joined clubs and teams because I loved being with others and I wanted to belong. Even then, there were events I engaged in because they had meaning for me and I wanted to make a difference - in my community as narrow as it was even then - it was important to show up and make that difference. I never had an athletic inclination. If you were an athlete and engaged in team sports, then you know that being engaged in sports not only fosters teamwork and collaboration - they encourage the development of a leadership character for many.

What happens in our schools - in this proving (and testing) ground for our future leaders? Are we striving to develop the qualities of responsibility, accountability, empathy, truth telling, focus, personal presence, just to name a few?

What do we want to happen in our schools to support growing strong leaders? Are we providing enough opportunities for our youth to step up, experience leadership and become what our communities need? And are we ensuring that our leaders in our schools are effective - that they

are working diligently to not only teach but to lead. The articles on leadership and schools focus as much on our school leaders as the leadership opportunities for their students.

Let's consider that we can challenge the pursuit of knowledge that occurs in a traditional learning system and rather, encourage the experience of leadership consistently in our learning models and frameworks. If we take on this challenge - what has to be different from this moment forward for our future leaders and their school leaders? What must we prove to our future leaders? What and where are you willing to lead?

Tools and Resources

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

[Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools Through Student Engaged Assessment](#) by Ron Berger and Leah Rugen (2014)

[Leverage Leadership: A Practical Guide to Building Exceptional Schools](#) by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo and Doug Lemov (2012)

[Ten Lessons in Leadership and Learning: An Educator's Journey](#) by John D'Auria (2010)

[Connecting Leadership with Learning: A Framework for Reflection, Planning and Action](#) by Michael A. Copland and Michael S. Knapp (2006)

THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

[The Wallace Foundation - School Leadership](#)

[School Climate and Shared Leadership](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools - Your Leadership Role](#)

[The Boomerang Project: The Middle School Transition](#)

[Global Leadership Adventures: Youth Leadership Programs in Asia, Africa and Latin America](#)

[Education Unlimited: Academic and Artistic Summer Camps](#) since 1993

Reflection

What do you remember of your first few days of each school year? The new outfit, the blank spiral notebooks, pencil bags, the backpack and the seeking out of old friends and looking forward to making new friends? Were you excited, scared, anxious, or just so ready to settle back in? Is there a particular school year and its first few days that immediately come to mind for you? If so, consider what was it about that school year that was more important to you than any other?

More importantly, what do you remember most about the leadership opportunities that came your way in the school year? Is there a particular year that was a turning point for you - when you realized and acknowledged that you were a leader? When did you choose to step up, declare your role as a leader and who provided the greatest support on your leadership path?

My list of leadership opportunities and learning looks something like this:

- Junior High School - ran for Student Council and lost; Strongest Supporter
- High School - Received the Marian Catholic Girl Scout Award; Became a Librarian Aide
- Joined the Keyettes Service Club - served as a VP, then President; Became a Student Aide to my Math Teacher; Worked in the School Day Care Center; Worked in a dime store and then a department store
- College - Assisted a Senior Girl Scout troop in the college community
- Attended a college, 1 of 8 in the US that operated with a special Work-Study program - worked in the kitchen, for an Art Professor and then for the Athletic Chair
- Served as the Big Sister/Little Sister Chair for the Religious Life Cabinet
- Applied to be the Women's Work Manager - not accepted
- Served as our Dorm President

I know there were other defining events and opportunities that shifted my focus, required me to be responsible, make decisions, and lead others. The point is that each of us has a different story and while it was my choice to engage and experience, every one of my experiences happened only because there was someone there to cheer me on, ensure I was prepared and ready and always agreed to be my champion. I don't remember what they said or how I even found out about the opportunities - I only remember their face, their smiles and that they were standing beside me and always challenging my knowledge and my belief in me. I do remember I was told often that I could do more. Yes, that was so important.

Now it's your turn. Create your LIST. Where/when did you take on new learning, stretch to be more, and step up to lead? Remember who was there for you? What did they do or say that was so special? I believe they were the true leaders in our schools and believed deeply that they were responsible for us - we were their future leaders. OK, so how are we doing?

Choose To

Learn ... Be ... Do ... Lead ...

Learn more ... Be there for another ... Do something for our future leaders ... Give encouragement ... Lead effectively and lead more ...

Teach a leadership quality to another ... Learn the lessons ... Lead the lessons .. Enrich our proving grounds.



September Joyful Observances

Backpack Safety Awareness Month

Be Kind to Editors and Writers Month

National Prosper Where You are Planted Month

[Self-Improvement Month](#)

Women's Friendship Month

Substitute Teacher Appreciation Week (September 7-12)

Dating and Life Coach Recognition Week (September 14-20)

[Hummingbird Celebration Week](#) (September 17-20)

National Keep Kids Creative Week (September 20-26)

[Great American Beer Festival](#) (September 24-26)

International Day of Charity (September 5)

Swap Ideas Day (September 10)

Google.com Day (September 15)

[Nickelodeon's Worldwide Day of Play](#) (September 20)

[Love Note Day](#) (September 25)

Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- * Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- * New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- * Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, life their voices, and...
- * Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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